(b) whether it is also a fact that the proposal was accepted and included in the Seventh Five Year Plan;

(c) whether any bank assistance or Asian Development Bank assistance has been sanctioned for the project; and

(d) whether Government have prepared any plan to complete the project; if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RES-SOURCE WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF SUR FACE TRANSPORT (SHRI MANU BHAI KOTADIA): (a) and (b) There is neither a proposal for four-laning the en tire stretch of National Highway No. 8 from Ahmedabad to Bombay (Length 502 km), nor was this provided for in the VII Five Year Plan. However, approximately 28 kms out of the total length are already 4-lane, widening to 4-lanes is in progress in about 86 kms more and Annual Plan 1990-91 contains provision for taking up four-laning in another 100 kms.

(c) No, Sir. Upto now no assistance for 4-laning of any portion of the existing National Highway between Ahmedabad and Bombay has been approved either by the Asian Development Bank or any other Bank.

(d) No, Sir.

New national highways in Gujarat

721. SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL:

SHRI JITENDRABHAI LABH-SHANKER BHATT:

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRAN-SPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government "of Gujarat have requested the Government of India to declare five new national highways in Gujarat; and

(b) what is the reaction of the Govern ment of India thereon?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RE-SOURCES WITH ADDITIONAL ' CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF SUR, FACE TRANSPORT (SHRI MANUBHAI KOTADIA): (a) and (b) In June, 1990, the Chief Minister, Gujarat had pro-posed for declaration of 6 State roads as National Highways. Further additions in the National Highways System would depend on the funds to be earmarked for it in the 8th Five Year Plan.

Re-introduction of ship service between Rameshwaram and Talaimannar

722. SHRI M. VINCENT: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the passenger ship from Rameshwaram to Talaimannar has been stopped;

(b) if so, whether there is any propsal to re-introduce this important service to enable foreign tourists specially from France, Germany, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia and Singapore to come to India.

THE MINISTER OF WATER RE-SOURCES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI MANUBHAI KOTADIA): (a) and (b) The ferry service between Rameshwaram and Talaimanner remains suspended due to security and logistical reasons. Given the prevailing situation in Sri Lanka, it is difficult to say when the ferry service can be resumed.

Ship-Building yards at Tuticorin port

723. SHRI M. VINCENT: Will the Minister of SURFAC TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government consideration to have two ship-building yards at Tuticorin Port;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the estimated cost involved therein; and

(c) by when this yard construction project is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RE SOURCES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF SUR FACE TRANSPORT (SHRI MANU BHAI KOTADIA): (a) There is no pro posal to set up Ship-building Yards at Tuticorin Port.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Starting speed-post service to Nagarcoil in Kanyakumari district

724. SHRI M. VINCENT: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a great need for starting Speed-Post service to Nagercoil, an important trade and business centre in Kanyakumari District; and

(b) if so, the steps taken to start this service as a priority basis?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI JAI PAR-KASH): (a) No, Sir, there is no traffic potential at Nagarcoil for introduction speed post service in the city.

(b) Does not arise in view of reply to (a) above.

Trade amongst SAARC Countries

725. SHRl VIREN J. SHAH:
SHRI SHANKAR DAYAL SINGH:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AF-FAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the study conducted by the Research and Information System for the Non-Aligned and other Developing Countries (RIS), which appeared in 'Business and Political Observer' of 6th December, 1990, especially on th; observation that expansion of trade among SAARC countries has more profound economic basis than achievement of regional self-reliance;

(b) whether it is a fact that unit values realised by SAARC countries in their exports to regional countries are higher than those to the rest of the World, especially for goods where freight cost is significant;

(c) if so, whether Government would consider the proposal of providing special measures for Intra-SAARC trade in con-sultation with other countries to substantially increase Intra-SAARC trade accounts from the present level of a mere 2. 5 per cent of the total trade of these countries; and

(d) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AF-FAIRS (SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUK-LA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) This is one of the conclusions of the RIS study.

(c) The Government is prepared to con-sider any proposal for special measures for substantially expanding intra-SAARC trade.

(d) Does not arise.

Steps to maintain peace in the sub-continent

726. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be) pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister has expressed his willingness to adopt measures to change the present situation in the' Sub-Continent and also to bring about confidence and trust in the region;

(b) whether the Prime Minister during his visit to Mate; had a talk with the Prime Ministers of Pakistan and Bangladesh;

(c) if so, the outcome of lie talks; and

(d) what further steps are contemplated maintain peace[1] in the region?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AF-FAIRS (SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA1; (a) At the Opening Session of the SAARC Summit on 21 November